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*Office Memorandum* • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : [REDACTED] 25X1A9a

DATE: 3 February 1953

FROM : FE Staff

SUBJECT: O/NE Material on Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions with respect to the Nationalist-held Offshore Islands.

1. No O/NE estimate has addressed itself to this question.

2. This question is touched upon in one estimate, NIE-27/1: "Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions with Respect to Taiwan through 1952," dated 1 April 1952. Although the question of Chinese Communist capabilities and intentions with respect to the offshore islands was not specifically examined, NIE-27/1 clearly implies that the Chinese Communists could capture these islands, and would probably attack these islands during the period of the estimate. The following are the mentions made of the islands in NIE-27/1:

(1952) a. Paragraph 7 (and 45): "During the period of this estimate, the Communists will probably conduct reconnaissance, nuisance, or destruction raids (either by air or sea) against Nationalist-held offshore islands and may assault and capture some of these islands. However, we do not believe such actions necessarily indicate an imminent invasion of Taiwan."

b. Paragraph 19-c: "The capabilities of the Chinese Communist Navy to support amphibious operations against Taiwan would be limited to the following: . . . Amphibious operations against Nationalist-held islands off the China coast."

c. Paragraph 38-b: "Communist assaults already made against small Nationalist-held islands can be interpreted as preparations for an invasion of Taiwan. Communist occupation of these islands increases their capability for concentrating shipping, troops, and supplies unobserved. On balance, however, we believe that such action is probably the first of a series of operations presently designed to deprive the Nationalists of bases for intelligence operations, guerrilla warfare, or for any contemplated assault of the mainland."

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3. Present factors bearing on Chinese Communist capabilities with respect to the Nationalist-held offshore islands are these:

a. Comparative O/B. Although changes of units have taken place in the last year, the presently accepted Chinese Communist O/B remains roughly 400,000 field force troops, Shanghai-Canton, with roughly 250,000 of this number deployed along the coast opposite Formosa (Chekiang, Fukien, and Eastern Kwantung). (See NIE-27/1). Military District troops supplement this number. The Nationalists have roughly 62,000 regular troops on the offshore islands, plus approximately 10,000 irregular troops. (See attached Nationalist O/B of these islands. Note the substantial forces on Chin Men). The Nationalists could of course reinforce these islands, but probably not to the degree necessary to insure their defense.

b. NIE-27/1, of 1 April 1952, gave the Chinese Communists adequate amphibious, airlift and logistic support capabilities to take these islands. These conditions still apply.

c. Chin Men and Matsu Islands are particularly vulnerable, since they lie off Amoy and Foochow respectively, major ports of embarkation, areas of Chinese Communist troops concentration, and cities having airfields available for jet and light bomber operations against the islands. Ta-Ch'en Islands, off Chekiang, the third major Nationalist-held offshore area, are relatively more isolated.

d. The Nationalists do not have adequate air defenses for these islands.

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CHINESE NATIONALIST O/B, OFFSHORE ISLANDS

A. Chin Men Defense Command (ca. 50,000)

22, 135 5th Army

22, 990 19th Army

1,500 5th Officer Combat Regiment

1,500 6th do.

1,500 9th do.

1,266 11th Artillery Reg.

625 46th Tank Bn.

97 3rd Co., 43rd Tank Bn.

B. Ma Tsu Defense Area (ca. 6000)

C. Ta Chen Islands (ca. 6000)

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